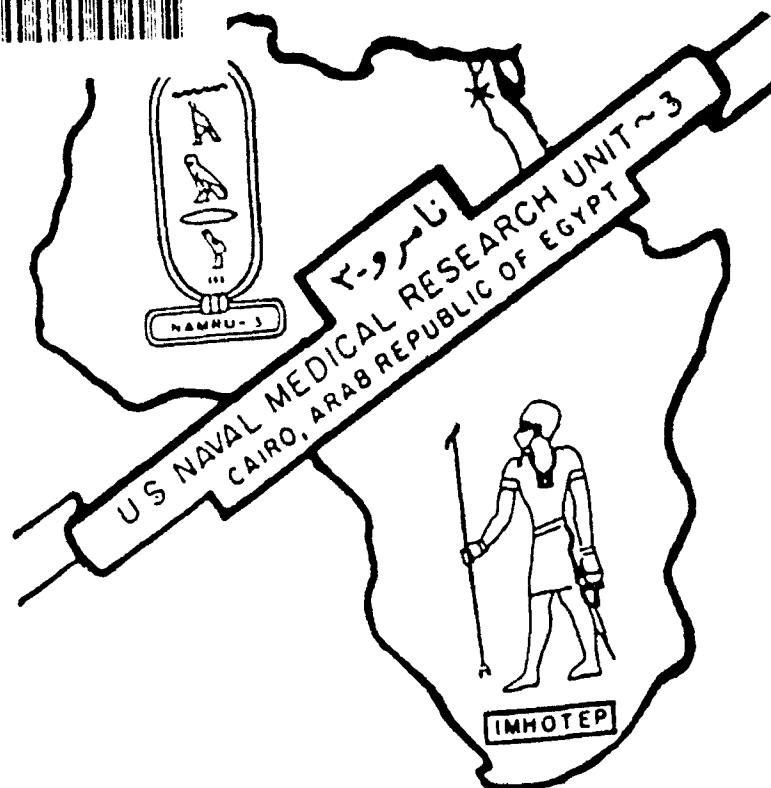


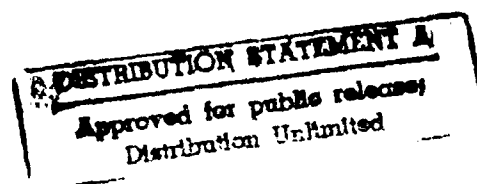
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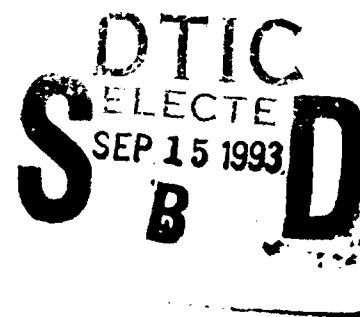
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MULTIPLE-DRUG-RESISTANT SALMONELLA TYPHI

BY

A.S. Mourad, M. Metwally, A. Nour El Deen, E.J. Threlfall,
B. Rowe, T. Mapes, R. Hedstrom, A.L. Bourgeois and J.R. Murphy



U.S. NAVAL MEDICAL RESEARCH UNIT NO. 3
(CAIRO, ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT)
PSC 452, BOX 5000
FPO AE 09835-0007

93-21486



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Multiple-Drug-Resistant *Salmonella typhi*

SIR—From May 1991 through January 1992, 35 of 192 individuals presenting to Alexandria Fever Hospital, Alexandria, Egypt, who had signs and symptoms consistent with the clinical diagnosis of enteric fever were studied. Cultures of blood, stool, or both specimens from all 35 patients yielded *Salmonella typhi*. Fifteen (43%) of the isolates were resistant to chloramphenicol, ampicillin, and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMZ) and were sensitive to norfloxacin, ciprofloxacin, and ceftriaxone (Bauer-Kirby method) [1]. Five of the 15 patients whose samples yielded multiresistant *S. typhi* isolates were treated with ofloxacin (200 mg every 12 hours for 10 days); these patients recovered and did not relapse. The first eight multiresistant *S. typhi* isolates and the two sensitive isolates were analyzed for Vi-phage type and plasmids. Drug-resistant isolates were of Vi-phage types E2 (seven) or D1-N (one), and resistances were encoded by a 120-MD plasmid of the H1 incompatibility group. For these isolates, the mean MIC of chloramphenicol was >90 $\mu\text{g/mL}$; that of ampicillin was >15 $\mu\text{g/mL}$; and that of TMP-SMZ was >50 $\mu\text{g/mL}$. Drug-sensitive *S. typhi* isolates were of Vi-phage types 57 and C1 and lacked the 120-MD plasmid.

All patients (eight males, seven females; mean age, 11.4 years) reported taking antibiotics before presentation, and the mean durations of illness before presentation were 13.8 days and 9.1 days, respectively, for patients with infection due to multiresistant or antibiotic-sensitive *S. typhi*. Although all patients from whom resistant *S. typhi* organisms were isolated were residents of the Alexandria area, the cases were not clustered in a specific area of the city.

Further testing of the multiresistant isolates revealed that all were positive for β -lactamase when the nitrocefin test was performed, and they were also positive for chloramphenicol acetyltransferase.

Rowe et al. [2] have reported the isolation of chloramphenicol-, ampicillin-, and trimethoprim-resistant *S. typhi* in the

United Kingdom during 1986–1991, with a marked increase in frequency of isolation of these organisms since 1990. Most of the isolates recovered by these authors were from individuals who had acquired infection in Pakistan or India, and the phage types involved were M1 (Pakistan) and E1 (India). Additional reports of *S. typhi* organisms with similar drug-resistance patterns have come from Pakistan [3], India [4], and Bahrain [5]. In the majority of multiresistant strains, the resistances have been encoded by a single plasmid of the incompatibility group-H complex, usually H1 [6–8].

Until 1988, Egypt was remarkably free of drug-resistant *S. typhi*; occasional chloramphenicol-resistant strains were isolated [9, 10], but these did not become established. In 1988 there was a report of a single isolate of *S. typhi* that was resistant to chloramphenicol, ampicillin, and TMP-SMZ [9]. Our results suggest that *S. typhi* with this phenotype has become established and that in some settings in this country, it is the causative agent of a significant fraction of cases of enteric fever seen in the hospitals. However, it is significant that the strains isolated in Egypt belong to phage types E1 and D1-N, in that it would appear that these strains are not an extension of the current epidemic in the Indian subcontinent.

These findings and those of other investigators [3–5] support the proposition that *S. typhi* strains resistant to all of the first-line antibiotics used in treatment of typhoid fever are endemic in the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Gulf, and now, in northeastern Africa. Because such strains are increasingly being isolated over a wide geographic area, consideration should now be given to treating infections acquired in the Indian subcontinent, Arabian Gulf, and northeastern Africa with agents other than chloramphenicol, ampicillin, or TMP-SMZ.

**A. S. Mourad, M. Metwally, A. Nour El Deen,
E. J. Threlfall, B. Rowe, T. Mapes, R. Hedstrom,
A. L. Bourgeois, and J. R. Murphy**

Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt; Division of Enteric Pathogens, Central Public Health Laboratory, London, United Kingdom; United States Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3, PSC 452, FPO AE, United States; and Center for Infectious Diseases, University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston, Houston, Texas

The opinions and assertions contained herein are the private ones of the authors and are not to be construed as official or reflecting the views of the U.S. Department of Navy, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Grant support: This study was supported by the U.S. Naval Medical Research and Development Command, Bethesda, Maryland, Work Unit No. 3M162770A870 AR-322.

Correspondence: Commanding Officer, NAVMEDRSCHU THREE Code 304B/JRM, PSC 452 Box 5000, FPO AE 09835-0007.

Reprints: Research Publications Branch, NAVMEDRSCHU THREE Code: 301B, PSC 452 Box 5000, FPO AE 09835-0007, United States.

Clinical Infectious Diseases 1993;17:135–6

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1058-4838/93/1701-0025\$02.00

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Service, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE 1993	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Multiple-Drug-Resistant <u>Salmonella typhi</u>			5. FUNDING NUMBERS PE- 62770A WU- 3M162770A870.AR.322	
6. AUTHOR(S) Mourad, A.S., Metwally, M., Nour El Deen, A., Threlfall, E.J., Rowe, B., Mapes, T., Hedstrom, R., Bourgeois, A.L. and Murphy, J.R.				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 PSC 452, Box 5000 FPO AE 09835-0007			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER 34/93	
9. SPONSORING MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Medical Research and Development Command, National Naval Medical Center Building 1, Tower 12 Bethesda, MD 20889-5044			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Published in: Clin. Infect. Dis., 17:135-136, 1993; Acc. No. 1756.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) Please see attached.			<p>Accession For</p> <p>NTIS GPO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>DTIC TAB <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Unannounced <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Justification _____</p> <p>By _____</p> <p>Distribution/ _____</p> <p>Availability Codes</p> <p>Dist Avail and/or Special</p> <p>A-1 20</p>	
14. SUBJECT TERMS Enteric fever; <u>Salmonella typhi</u> ; Drug resistance; Patients; Alexandria, Egypt.			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 2	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	